What Is Claimed Is:

1   1.   A method to facilitate merging different versions of a database

2 object, comprising:

3   receiving metadata associated with a first version of the database object

4 and a second version of the database object;

5   comparing metadata associated with the first version of the database object

6 with metadata associated with the second version of the database object to create a

7 difference report; and

8   creating an action plan from the difference report that specifies how to

9 merge metadata associated with the first version of the database object with

10 metadata associated with the second version of the database object.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein metadata associated with the first

2 version and the second version of the database object are represented in Unified

3 Modeling Language.

1   3.   The method of claim 1, wherein comparing metadata associated

2 with the first version and second version of the database object involves

3 customizing which associations to compare.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein comparing metadata associated

2 with the first version and second version of the database object involves

3 customizing how to compare the first metadata and the second metadata.

1   5.   The method of claim 1, wherein creating the action plan from the

2   difference report involves allowing a user to select which actions to take in

3   merging metadata in order to produce merged metadata with desired properties

4   and attributes.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein creating the action plan involves

2   examining the difference report to determine what actions to take in bringing

3   metadata associated with the first version and second versions of the database

4   object into agreement.

1   7.   The method of claim 5, wherein metadata associated with first and

2   second versions of the metadata object can define database objects, wherein

3   database objects include tables, columns, dimensions, cube, views, materialized

4   views, and external tables.

1   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the action plan can specify a

2   number of actions including creating, updating, and deleting database objects, and

3   their properties.

1   9.   A computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that

2   when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method to

3   facilitate merging different versions of a database object, the method comprising:

4   receiving metadata associated with a first version of the database object

5   and a second version of the database object;

13

6   comparing metadata associated with the first version of the database object

7   with metadata associated with the second version of the database object to create a

8   difference report; and

9   creating an action plan from the difference report that specifies how to

10   merge metadata associated with the first version of the database object with

11   metadata associated with the second version of the database object.

1   10.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein

2   metadata associated with the first version and the second version of the database

3   object are represented in Unified Modeling Language.

1   11.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein

2   comparing metadata associated with the first version and second version of the

3   database object involves customizing which associations to compare.

1   12.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein

2   comparing metadata associated with the first version and second version of the

3   database object involves customizing how to compare the first metadata and the

4   second metadata.

1   13.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein

2   *executing* the action plan from the difference report involves allowing a user to

3   select which actions to take in merging metadata in order to produce merged

4   metadata with desired properties and attributes.

1   14.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein

2   creating the action plan involves examining the difference report to determine

3   what actions to take in bringing metadata associated with the first version and

4   second versions of the database object into agreement.

1   15.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein

2   metadata associated with first and second versions of the metadata object can

3   define database objects, wherein database objects include tables, columns, views,

4   dimensions, and cubes.

1   16.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein the

2   action plan can specify a number of actions including creating, updating, and

3   deleting database objects and their properties.

1   17.   An apparatus to facilitate merging different versions of a database

2   object, comprising:

3   a receiving mechanism configured to receive metadata associated with a

4   first version of the database object and a second version of the database object;

5   a comparing mechanism configured to compare metadata associated with

6   the first version of the database object with metadata associated with the second

7   version of the database object to create a difference report; and

8   a creating mechanism configured to create an action plan from the

9   difference report that specifies how to merge metadata associated with the first

10   version of the database object with metadata associated with the second version of

11   the database object.

1   18.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein metadata associated with the

2   first version and the second version of the database object are represented in

3   Unified Modeling Language.

1   19.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein comparing metadata associated

2   with the first version and second version of the database object involves

3   customizing which associations to compare.

1   20.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein comparing metadata associated

2   with the first version and second version of the database object involves

3   customizing how to compare the first metadata and the second metadata.

1   21.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein *executing* the action plan from

2   the difference report involves allowing a user to select which actions to take in

3   merging metadata in order to produce merged metadata with desired properties

4   and attributes.

1   22.   The apparatus of claim 21, wherein creating the action plan

2   involves examining the difference report to determine what actions to take in

3   bringing metadata associated with the first version and second versions of the

4   database object into agreement.

1   23.   The apparatus of claim 21, wherein metadata associated with first

2   and second versions of the metadata object can define tables, columns, properties

3   of tables, and properties of columns.

16

1   24.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the action plan can specify a

2   number of actions including creating, updating, and deleting tables, columns, or

3   properties.

17